

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 PPT-01 LAB-04 SIL-01
COME-00 EB-08 AID-05 PC-01 CCO-00 ACDA-07 MCT-01
IO-13 EUR-12 CPR-01 /114 W

-----251528Z 102883 /50

P R 251433Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3246

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1793

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET, ASEC

SUBJ: CONCERN OVER SECURITY IN ETHIOPIA

REF: STATE 65918

1. WHILE SITUATION DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS HAS EASED SINCE SEARCH PROCEDURES WERE INSTITUTED MAR 23 (ADDIS ABABA 1746 AND 1768), INTENSITY OF NIGHT FIRING HAS INCREASED AND OVERALL LEVEL OF TENSION IN CITY IS HIGH. OCCASIONAL DAYLIGHT FIRE-FIGHTS DO NOT HELP -- WIFE OF AN AID EMPLOYEE WAS PINNED DOWN IN HER HOUSE FOR ALMOST TWO HOURS MAR 23 BY INDISCRIMINATE FIRING CLOSE BY THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH HER.

2. ALMOST EVERY MISSION IN ADDIS HAS OWN TALES TO TELL. SWEDISH COMMUNICATOR WOUNDED AT ROADBLOCK EVENING MAR 24, ZAMBIAN AMB'S HOUSE HIT BY TWO STRAY BULLETS (AND APPARENTLY ZAIRIAN AND SIERRA LEONEAN AMBS AS WELL, MAAG MAJOR FIRED AT ONCE (MISSED) IN HIS CAR AT IMPROMPTU ROADBLOCK EVENING MAR 24. NONE OF OUR HOUSES HAVE BEEN SEARCHED, HOWEVER, AND KEBELES HAVE OBVIOUSLY GOTTEN WORD TO LEAVE
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DIPS ALONE, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE STILL A FEW SLIPS RE CAR SEARCHES.

3. MAJOR PROBLEM IS PLETHORA OF WEAPONS AND DISPOSITION USE THEM INDISCRIMINATELY BY UNTRAINED PEOPLE. EPMG OBVIOUSLY MAKING ALL-OUT EFFORT OVERCOME PROBLEM OF OPPOSITION ELEMENTS, AND IT VERY LIKELY THAT UNTIL

EPMG BELIEVES IT IS ON TOP OF PROBLEM, CURRENT SITUATION WILL CONTINUE. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, WE HAVE IMPOSED, AS OF MAR 25, OUR OWN 1900 CURFEW EXCEPT FOR ESSENTIAL TRAVEL SUCH AS MEDICAL EMERGENCIES OR UNAVOIDABLE REPRESENTATION. WE HAVE ALSO POSTPONED COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED FOR THIS WEEKEND THAT CALL FOR CONCENTRATION OF AMERICANS. CONCENTRATION PER SE IS NO PARTICULAR PROBLEM SINCE INCIDENTS IN CITY ARE NOT ANTI-FOREIGN, BUT WE PREFER AVOID SITUATIONS WHERE FIRE-FIGHTS ELSEWHERE MIGHT RESULT IN STRAY SHOTS IN DIRECTION OF CONCENTRATION.

4. WE SHALL CONTINUE WATCH SITUATION CAREFULLY AND IF, IN OUR JUDGMENT, FURTHER STEPS ARE REQUIRED, WE SHALL NOT HESITATE TO TAKE OR RECOMMEND THEM. WE ARE, OF COURSE, IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH MANY MISSIONS HERE, INCLUDING ECA.
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